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FIGHT OR DIE!!



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- No.1045 COMBINED OPERATION**
- No.1046 FIGHT OR DIE !**
- No.1047 BLOOD FEUD**
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- No.1049 PIPELINE TO PERIL**

10 Terrific Issues Every Month

FIGHT- OR DIE !

IN DECEMBER 1940, THE BRITISH ARMY MOVED FORWARD FROM ITS POSITION AT MERSA MATRUH AND, TWO DAYS LATER, ENTERED SIDI BARRANI, CAPTURING 20,000 ITALIAN PRISONERS.

OKAY, TONY?
LET'S ROLL -- AND
THE BET'S ON! THE
TROOP THAT BAGS
THE MOST TANKS
GETS THE FIRST
LEAVE IN CAIRO!

FOR TWO ARTILLERY CAPTAINS, TONY GIBBS AND "COOKY" COOK, IT WAS THE START OF AN ADVENTURE WHICH WAS TO PROVE THAT NO MAN CAN EXPECT TO CONTROL HIS OWN DESTINY IN THE VIOLENT TIMES OF WAR.

Chapter 1. *The Wager*

THE WAR WAS STILL YOUNG ENOUGH TO BE AN ADVENTURE. IT STILL SEEMED A JOKE TO GET ON KILLING ENEMY TANKS.

TALLYHO, TONY! I'LL THINK OF YOU WHEN I'M IN A SOFT BED IN CAIRO. I'LL LAUGH MYSELF TO SLEEP!

DON'T COUNT YOUR TANKS BEFORE YOU'VE CRACKED THE HATCHES, COOKY BOY!



AS THE MATILDA TANKS OF THE ARMoured DIVISION SWEEPED ROUND IN AN ENCIRCLING MOVEMENT, THE GUNS WAITED IN AMBUSH FOR THE ENEMY ARMOUR TO SPILL THROUGH THE GAP LEFT IN THE MIDDLE.

R.A.F. REPORT ENEMY TANKS, IN HELLFIRE PASS, SIR!

THIS IS IT!
LOAD A.P.!



THE ITALIAN TANK-DESIGNERS HAD BUILT THEIR CRUISER TANKS FOR SPEED. BUT SPEED MEANT LIGHT ARMOUR. THE 25-POUNDER ARMOUR PIERCING SHELLS OPENED THEM LIKE TIN CANS.



IN THAT FIRST SUCCESSFUL ACTION,
ABLE TROOP CHALKED UP EIGHT
TANKS. IF THEY COULD KEEP IT UP,
THE BET WAS IN THE BAG !



IT WAS TONY GIBBS'S FIRST GOOD
LOOK AT THE DESTRUCTION HIS
GUNS HAD WROUGHT.

STONE ME !
THEY'RE BREWED
UP GOOD AN'
PROPER, SIR !

THEY DIDN'T
STAND AN'
EARTHLY !





SOMEHOW, THE SWEET TASTE OF TRIUMPH WAS ALREADY TURNING SOUR IN TONY'S MOUTH. BUT IT STILL TASTED GOOD TO THE EBULLIENT COOKY . . .



SUDDENLY, TONY HATED THE IDEA OF WAGERING ON DEATH AND DESTRUCTION . . .

WE GOT EIGHT, COOKY. BUT, LOOK--LET'S CALL THE WHOLE THING OFF. I DON'T THINK I LIKE BETTING ON THIS SORT OF THING.



THEY WERE TWO ENTIRELY DIFFERENT CHARACTERS -- BUT EACH WITH A GREAT LIKING FOR THE OTHER. YET NOW TONY FELT IRRITATED AT HIS FRIEND'S APPARENT CALLOUSNESS.

I JUST SAID CANCEL THE BET. YOU CAN HAVE THE FIRST CAIRO LEAVE IF IT'LL MAKE YOU HAPPY -- BUT I'M NOT BETTING ON HUMAN LIVES. OKAY?



COOKY JERKED IN SURPRISE AT THE OTHER'S CURT TONE.

HOLD YOUR HORSES, TONY!
'COURSE WE'LL CALL IT OFF IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU FEEL -- BUT DON'T SHED TEARS FOR THE EYTIIES! YOU KNOW HOW THEY GOT KILLED? TRYING LIKE THE DEVIL TO KILL US!



FROM THEN ON, THE IMPERIAL ARMY ADVANCED STEADILY. ALL THE MIGHT OF AN ARMoured BRIGADE IN BATTLE ROLLED AND LURCHED ACROSS THE UNEVEN SAND -- TANKS, GUNS, TRUCKS, AMBULANCES, A VAST ARMADA OF THE DESERT.



SOON THE WEATHER CHANGED, STARTING WITH A SANDSTORM DURING THE ATTACK ON SIDI BARRANI.

CEASE FIRE!
GET THE MUZZLE
COVER ON
TARPAULIN THE
AMMO!



HIGH WINDS LASHED THE SAND INTO BITING SAVAGERY -- TO BE FOLLOWED BY TORRENTIAL DOWNPOURS OF RAIN. BATTLE IN THE SUN HAD BEEN HIGH ADVENTURE -- BUT UNDER THESE CONDITIONS THE GILT WAS DRIPPING FROM THE GINGERBREAD.

COR! WHO
SAID IT NEVER
RAINED IN THE
DESERT!

QUIT SQUAWKING,
BUSBY -- AND DRIVE
ON! WE'VE GOT AN
R.V. TO KEEP.



TONY GIBBS'S RENDEZVOUS WAS WITH A SQUADRON OF MATILDAS.

STOP THE JEEP, BUSBY. THE MATILDAS ARE LEADING THE ATTACK INTO SIDI BARRANI. WE'VE GOT TO HANDLE ANY JERRY MARK TWOS THAT SLIP OUT AND TRY TO GET BEHIND THEM.



THE MARK II PANZERS WERE THERE -- BUT THEY CHOSE TO FACE THE MATILDAS HEAD ON -- WITH DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES !

NEW TARGET AT TWO O'CLOCK.
FIRE WHEN READY!

COO! YOU GOTTA ADMIT THEY'RE BRAVE! THEY'RE TAKING A HECK OF A PASTING!



THROUGH THE MIST OF THE RAIN, THE REASON FOR THE ITALIANS' FANATICAL DEFENCE COULD BE SEEN.

LORRIED INFANTRY PARKED BEHIND ENEMY TANK SCREEN. DO WE Clobber THEM, TOO? OVER.

CALLING RED NINER! NOT UNLESS THEY SHOW FIGHT, THEY WILL PROBABLY SURRENDER.

THE ITALIAN COLONEL PETROZIE IN THE LAST SURVIVING ENEMY TANK FINALLY HUNG OUT A WHITE FLAG.

WE CAN FIGHT NO LONGER! WE ARE OVERWHELMED BY SUPERIOR ODDS ...

CUT THE CROSS-TALK! WHAT THE HECK AM I GOING TO DO WITH YOU? CAN YOU FIND YOUR OWN WAY BACK TO OUR INFANTRY?

PETROZIE RAISED HIS EYEBROWS. HE HAD HOPED FOR SOME CEREMONY -- A FORMAL HANDING IN OF HIS ARMS, SOME RESPECT TO HIS RANK. BUT TO BE SHUNTED BACK WITHOUT EVEN A GUARD !

IF THAT IS YOUR ORDER...

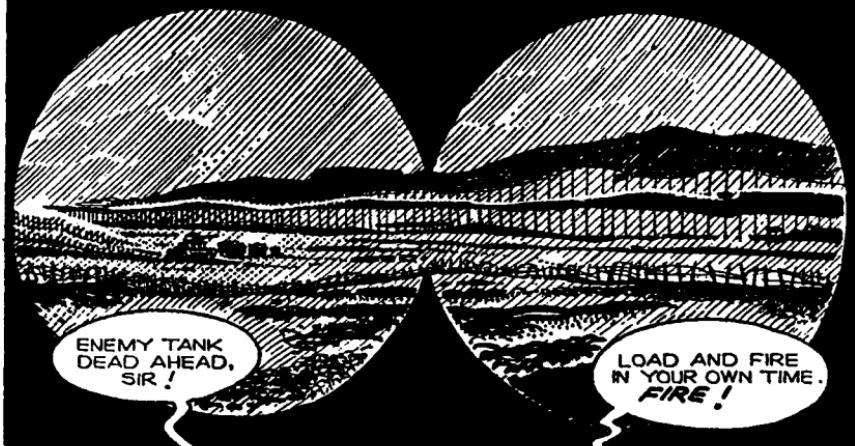
THAT'S MY ORDER! I'LL WIRELESS BACK SO THAT THEY'LL EXPECT YOU.

BACK WENT THE MESSAGE TO BRIGADE H.Q. AND FROM THEM OUT ON TO THE BRIGADE NET. IT WAS UNFORTUNATE THAT ABLE TROOP'S SIGNALLER WAS HAVING TROUBLE WITH HIS WIRELESS.

AFRID IT'S NO GOOD, SIR! WATER'S GOT IN IT. I'LL HAVE TO STRIP THE SET AND DRY IT OUT.

DO THAT AND BE QUICK ABOUT IT. WE'RE OUT ON A LIMB WITHOUT COMMUNICATIONS.

IT WAS TO BE TRAGICALLY UNFORTUNATE FOR COLONEL PETROZIE AND THE SURRENDERING ITALIAN INFANTRY. THE M.II CAME DIMLY OUT OF THE MIST, FLYING A WHITE FLAG THAT HUNG DIMLY IN THE RAIN.



THE OPENING ROUNDS WERE DEAD ON TARGET. THE TANK WAS HIT FIRST AND FOLLOWING ROUNDS RANGED ON THE TRUCKS.



EVEN AS THE GUNSMOKE CLEARED, THE RAIN STOPPED AND THE SUN BROKE THROUGH THE CLOUDS, TONY GIBBS STARED AT THEIR TARGET IN HORROR ...



THIS TIME, GIBBS WENT FORWARD WITH DESPAIR IN HIS HEART. ALREADY HE COULD SEE THE TROOP HAD BLUNDERED, SLAUGHTERING MEN COMING IN UNDER A FLAG OF SURRENDER.



THE BRITISH GUNNERS WERE SOON REMORSEFULLY TENDING THE WOUNDED ITALIANS WHO HAD SUFFERED FROM THAT TRAGIC TRICK OF FATE.



BUT THE PHILOSOPHY OF COLONEL PETROZIE COULD NOT WIPE AWAY TONY GIBBS'S BURDEN OF GUILT.



MEANWHILE, THE R.A.F. DETAILED TO ASSIST IN THE SIDI BARRANI ATTACK HAD SCRAMBLED AS THE WEATHER CLEARED. THEY, TOO, WERE NOT SURE OF THE GROUND SITUATION.



BRITISH AND ITALIAN ALIKE THREW THEMSELVES TO THE SAND AS THE BLENHEIMS DIVED IN, PLUMMETING THEIR BOMB LOADS ON FRIEND AND FOE INDISCRIMINATELY.



THE GUNNER CAPTAIN GOT TO HIS FEET, TREMBLING WITH ANGER AT THE UTTER FUTILITY OF IT ALL.



Chapter 2. Abandoned Gun

SIDI BARRANI WAS TAKEN -- AN ARMY OF ITALIANS CAPTURED. FOR A BRIEF MOMENT, IT SEEMED AS IF THE WAR IN THE DESERT WAS AS GOOD AS WON.



KEEP MOVING, SPORTS...
THOUGH WHERE THE HECK
WE'RE GOING TO PUT YOU
ALL, I WOULDN'T KNOW.



HEY, WHAT'S
ALL THIS TWADDLE,
TONY? YOU GONE
BOMB HAPPY OR
SOMETHING?

SORRY, COOKY--IT'S
NOT EASY TO EXPLAIN.
BUT I'VE GOT AN
APPOINTMENT WITH THE
BRIGADIER NOW.



A MOBILE INDUSTRIAL GAS COMPANY! YOU COULD NOT GET MUCH MORE NON-COMBATANT THAN THAT! BUT SERGEANT-MAJOR CHARLIE PELLEW WAS PROUD OF HIS OUTFIT.

SOMEBODY'S GOT TO MAKE THE OXY-ACETYLENE TO DISH OUT TO THE FITTERS. THEY CAN'T MEND TANKS WITHOUT OXY-ACETYLENE, CAN THEY, SIR?



GENERATING SETS, RECTIFYING SETS, COMPRESSOR SETS. ALL HIGHLY TECHNICAL, SIR. AND I UNDERSTAND YOU'RE NOT...



NO, I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THE PROCESS. BUT I CAN COMMAND IT. I LOOK TO YOU TO PRODUCE THE GAS, SERGEANT-MAJOR.

THE FORMAL TRANSFER HAD STILL TO GO THROUGH, BUT TONY SWAPPED HIS GUN BADGE FOR THE ORDNANCE ONE.

GOOD BADGE, THAT, SIR. AN OLD 'UN, TOO... DATES BACK TO THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

I KNOW, AND I'LL TRY NOT TO DISGRACE IT, SERGEANT-MAJOR.



THEN THE WAR FLARED UP AGAIN. THE DRIVE FOR SOLLUM, BARDIA, BENGHAZI WAS ON. COOKY COOK ACTED AS IF HE HAD TO FIGHT FOR TWO TROOPS NOW.

FIRE! WIPE OUT THE SWINE!



THE ITALIANS HELD, BROKE, HELD AGAIN, ALL THE TIME LOSING LONG TORTUOUS COLUMNS OF PRISONERS TO THE COMMONWEALTH TROOPS. AFTER SOLLUM, THE ADVANCE FOR BARDIA ...

SWING SOUTH! THEY'VE PUT US IN A BOX FOR PROTECTION OF THE SOFT TRUCKS! MIGHT MEET THE GAS MEN, EH?



YOU MEAN TONY GIBBS'S OUTFIT? HAVEN'T HEARD MUCH OF HIM LATELY, COOKY.

IN THE THREE-SIDED BOX MADE BY THE ARMOUR, THE MAINTENANCE AND HEADQUARTERS FLEET OF TRUCKS AND TRAILERS LEAGUERED THAT NIGHT IN A WADI, WHILE THE ESCORTING ARTILLERY WAS SITED ON THE FLANKS.



MILES AWAY ACROSS THE DESERT, THE TANKS AND INFANTRY OF THE BRITISH, AUSTRALIAN, NEW ZEALAND AND INDIAN FORMATIONS WERE BATTERING AT BARDIA.



THE BRUNT FELL ON COOKY'S FOUR GUNS. THEY HIT BACK AT THE ITALIAN ARMOUR OVER OPEN SIGHTS.

NUMBER THREE ~~
WHAT'S HAPPENED?
WHY AREN'T YOU
FIRING?

OUT OF
AMMO, SIR! I'M
REPLENISHING
FROM THE
AMMO TRUCK!

MORE THAN ONE TRUCK HAD BEEN HIT ALREADY. THE ODDS AGAINST THE AMMO TRUCK BEING ON THE RECEIVING END OF A TANK SHELL WERE NOT HIGH. BUT WHEN IT HAPPENED, THE RESULT WAS AWESOME.



MOST OF NO.3 DETACHMENT WERE LOST. THE OTHER THREE GUNS KEPT FIRING, HOLDING OFF THE MARAUDERS WHILE THEIR AMMO LASTED, GIVING THE SOFT VEHICLES A CHANCE TO PULL OUT.



HU COOKY HAD
ANOTHER DEMAND
TO MAKE ...



HANG ON A MINUTE! I WANT
ONE OF YOUR TRUCKS! I CAN
ONLY TOW THREE GUNS. I'VE
LOST ONE OF THE G.T.V.'S. LEAVE
ONE OF YOUR STUPID TRAILERS
BEHIND AND HOOK THE GUN ON
INSTEAD.

SORRY! I'M NOT LEAVING ANYTHING.
THE TRAILERS ARE ON MY CHARGE.
YOU CAN LEAVE THE GUN--THERE'S
PLENTY MORE. DRIVE ON!



I CAN--
AND OO! I'M
A GUNNER NO
LONGER!

TO COOKY THAT WAS BLASPHEMY!
YOU COULD NOT LEAVE A GUN
TO BE CAPTURED!



THERE'S
NO TIME FOR
THIS FARCE! I'LL
GET THE TRUCK
MYSELF!

YOU WON'T!
NOW GET OUT OF
MY WAY! THE
TANKS ARE
CLOSING IN.

COOKY'S RAGE BLINDED HIS REASON, HIS PILE-DRIVING RIGHT SLID PAST TONY'S EAR. GIBBS SNAPPED A TORRID LEFT INTO THE OTHER'S MIDRIFF AND COMPLETED THE DESTRUCTION WITH A SOLID PUNCH TO THE JAW.



AS HE BUNDLED THE INERT BODY INTO THE JEEP, THE THREE GUNS DROVE PAST.



THE SITUATION COULD STILL HAVE BEEN DESPERATE HAD NOT A SQUADRON OF MATILDAS, HASTILY CALLED BY WIRELESS, ARRIVED TO TAKE CARE OF THE MARAUDING ITALIAN ARMOUR.



THE FOLLOWING MORNING, IT WAS A SILENT AND BITTER MAN WHO RETURNED TO COLLECT THE ABANDONED 25-POUNDER GUN. CAPTAIN COOKY COOK FELT DISGRACED.

YOU COMING BACK FOR THAT PEA-SHOOTER? MIGHT SEND A LETTER OF THANKS TO THE ARMoured CORPS FOR IT! TRUST THE CAVALRY TO GET YOU OUT OF A MESS!

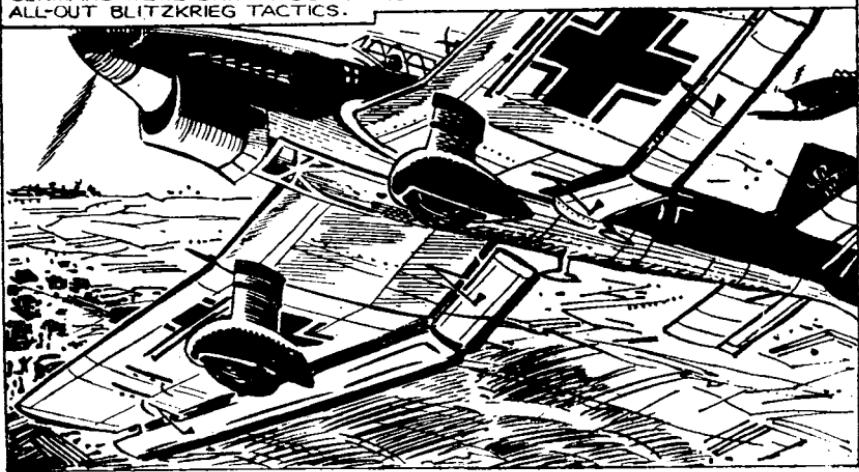


Chapter 3. Retreat

THE PATHS OF TONY GIBBS AND COOKY COOK DID NOT CROSS AGAIN UNTIL APRIL IN THE FOLLOWING YEAR. THE BRITISH ARMY HAD ENTERED GREECE IN A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO HOLD THE GERMAN INVASION. THE ARMoured BRIGADE SET UP ITS MAINTENANCE UNIT NEAR MOUNT OLYMPUS.



IT WAS TO BE A FORLORN GESTURE ON BRITAIN'S PART. THE IMPERIAL FORCES WERE FEW IN NUMBER, THE GREEK ARMY ILL-EQUIPPED. THE GERMANS WERE DRIVING DOWN FROM YUGOSLAVIA, EXPLOITING THEIR ALL-OUT BLITZKRIEG TACTICS.





COOKY COOK WAVED A BRIGADE AUTHORITY IN FRONT OF TONY'S NOSE ...

THIS'LL TELL YOU WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR GAS METERS ! I'VE TOP PRIORITY TO ESTABLISH ANOTHER DEFENCE LINE NORTH OF VOLOS. GET YOUR OUTFIT OUT OF THE WAY !

HOW THE DICKENS CAN I ? THERE'S NO ROOM TO PASS !



DITCH YOUR TRUCKS OVER THE SIDE ! YOU WON'T GET THEM OUT OF GREECE, ANYWAY. DITCH THEM -- OR, BY HEAVENS, I'LL OPEN FIRE ON THEM !

FOR ONE EXPLOSIVE MOMENT, TONY HESITATED -- BUT COOK HAD THE BRIGADE PRIORITY.

OKAY -- I'LL DITCH MY TRUCKS. ALL EXCEPT ONE TO TAKE THE MEN OUT.

THAT'S THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE SHOWED SENSE SINCE SIDI BARRANI !



TONY HAD THE CYLINDER-STORE TRUCK PULLED IN TO THE ONLY DEPRESSION IN THE ROCK. THEN, ONE BY ONE ~ THE VALUABLE EQUIPMENT WAS PUSHED OVER THE CLIFF EDGE. SERGEANT-MAJOR CHARLIE PELLEW WATCHED THEM GO WITH TEARS IN HIS EYES.



THE GUN TROOP THUNDERED SOUTH AND TONY LOADED ALL HIS MEN IN THE CYLINDER TRUCK.



BEFORE VOLOS, THEY MADE CONTACT WITH THE MASS OF THE ARMY,
CAUGHT UP IN THE BOTTLENECK OF THE PORT.



THEY TURNED ON TO A SIDE ROAD
WHICH LED SOUTHWARDS INTO THE
MOUNTAINS. THEN ...





SOME THING OF THE OLD COOKY
WROKE THROUGH -- AS IF HE STILL
COULD NOT BELIEVE TONY GIBBS
HAD DESERTED THE ROYAL
REGIMENT THEY BOTH HAD BEEN
PROUD TO SERVE IN.



IT WAS TRUE THE GERMANS WERE
DIFFERENT TO THE ITALIANS, BUT
WAR WAS STILL A MATTER OF
SENSELESS SLAUGHTER IN TONY'S
BOOK.





WHEN THE BOMBERS LEFT, THERE WAS AN UNEARTHLY
SILENCE. THEY TURNED THE TRUCK AND HEADED BACK
TOWARD THE GUN POSITIONS.



GOOD GRIEF !
WHAT A
SHAMBLES !

LOOKS LIKE
CAPTAIN COOK
OVER THERE,
SIR !

LUKY HAD BEEN HIT BY SPLINTERs
BUT IT WAS MORE SHOCKED THAN
GROSSLY HURT. HE BABBLERD LIKE
A CRAZY MAN.

TAKE IT EASY,
BOY. WE'LL FIX
YOU UP.

THE FILTHY
JERRIES ! THEY'VE
SMASHED MY
TROOP... MY
TROOP !

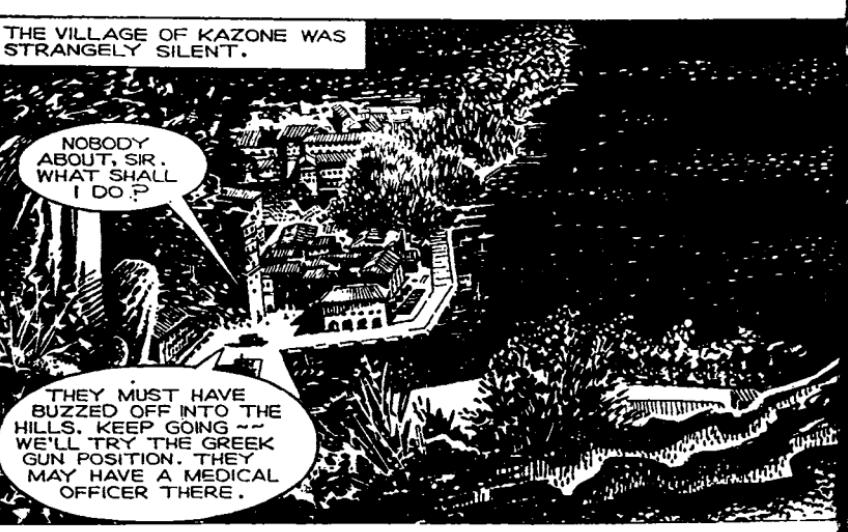


THEY LIFTED COOKY ABOARD THE TRUCK AND SET OFF BACK TO VOLOS: BUT BEFORE THEY HAD GONE FAR ...

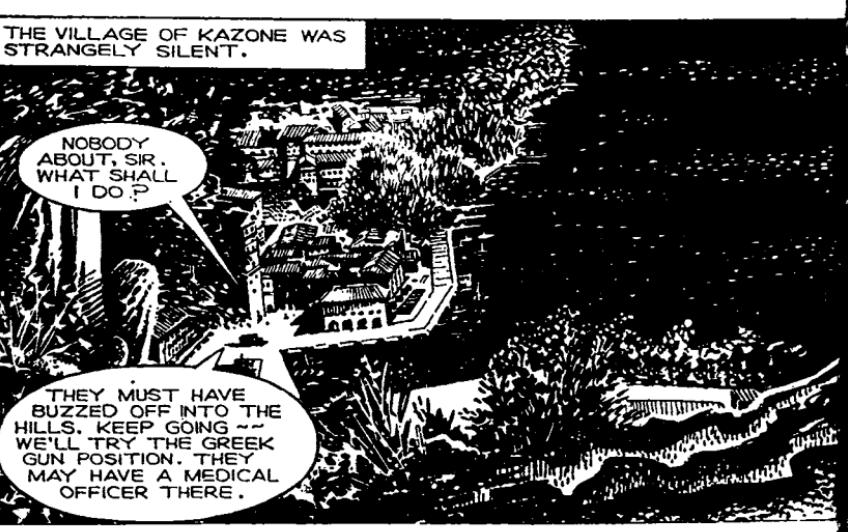


GERMANS --
AND MOVING
FAST! BACK UP
BEFORE THEY SPOT
US! BACK TO THE
VILLAGE !

THE VILLAGE OF KAZONE WAS STRANGELY SILENT.



NOBODY
ABOUT, SIR.
WHAT SHALL
I DO ?



THEY MUST HAVE
BUZZED OFF INTO THE
HILLS. KEEP GOING --
WE'LL TRY THE GREEK
GUN POSITION. THEY
MAY HAVE A MEDICAL
OFFICER THERE .



KORIZIS SPOKE RAPIDLY TO THE GREEK SOLDIER, WHO MOUNTED THE STEP OF THE TRUCK AND DIRECTED THEM NORTHWARDS FOR A QUARTER OF A MILE.

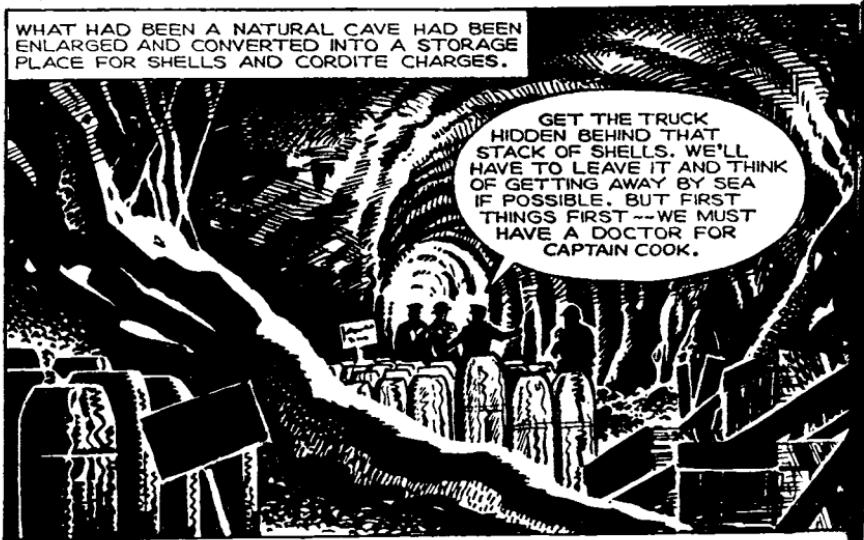
IN HERE. THE COLONEL SAYS YOU GO IN HERE.

IT'S ONE OF THE MAGAZINES FOR THE GUN POSITION. GOOD AS ANYWHERE IN AN EMERGENCY, I GUESS.



WHAT HAD BEEN A NATURAL CAVE HAD BEEN ENLARGED AND CONVERTED INTO A STORAGE PLACE FOR SHELLS AND CORDITE CHARGES.

GET THE TRUCK HIDDEN BEHIND THAT STACK OF SHELLS. WE'LL HAVE TO LEAVE IT AND THINK OF GETTING AWAY BY SEA IF POSSIBLE. BUT FIRST THINGS FIRST --WE MUST HAVE A DOCTOR FOR CAPTAIN COOK.



OUTSIDE, THE GERMANS HAD ALREADY ARRIVED TO TAKE OVER THE KAZONE GUN POSITION.

QUICK OFF THE MARK,
WASN'T THEY,
SIR ?

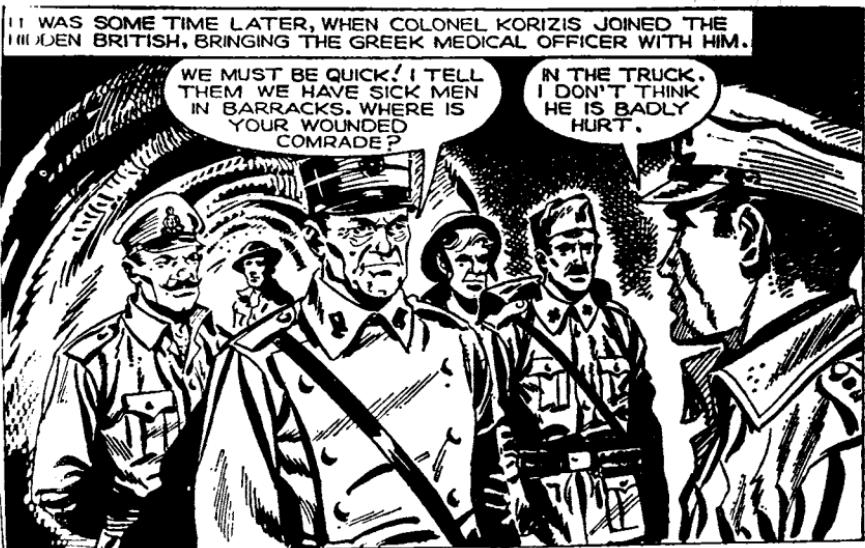
IT'S A VITAL DEFENCE POINT.
IT COVERS THE PORT OF VOLOS.
I ONLY HOPE THE GREEKS SPIKED
THE GUNS BEFORE HANDING
THEM OVER !

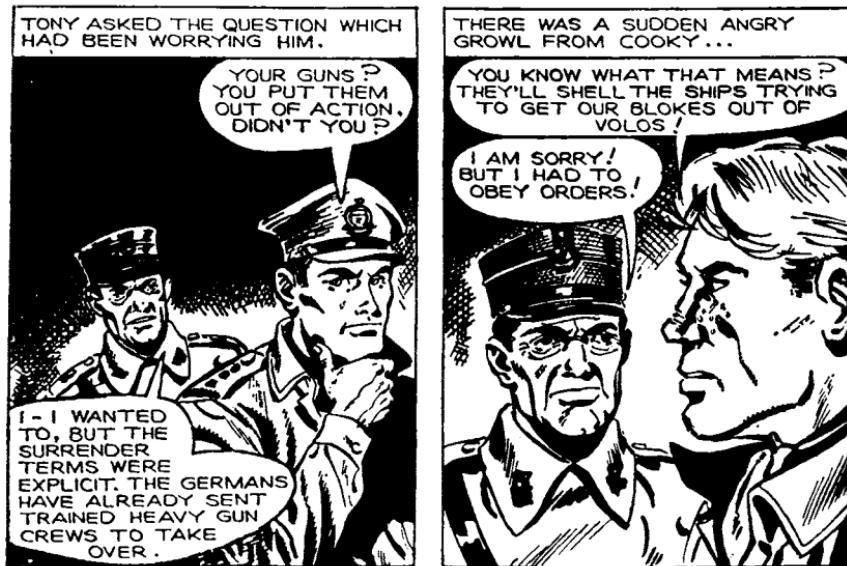


IT WAS SOME TIME LATER, WHEN COLONEL KORIZIS JOINED THE HIDDEN BRITISH, BRINGING THE GREEK MEDICAL OFFICER WITH HIM.

WE MUST BE QUICK! I TELL THEM WE HAVE SICK MEN IN BARRACKS. WHERE IS YOUR WOUNDED COMRADE?

IN THE TRUCK.
I DON'T THINK HE IS BADLY HURT.





Chapter 4. Return to Action

DESPITE THE RISK HE WAS TAKING, THE GREEK COLONEL SUPPLIED THEM WITH FOOD. COOKY, HOWEVER, WAS STILL SAVAGE IN HIS CONDEMNATION OF THEIR SURRENDER TERMS.



THEY SPENT AN UNEASY NIGHT, TO BE WAKENED AT DAWN BY THE CRASHING EXPLOSION OF THE NEARBY GUN BATTERY.



THE PORT OF VOLOS WAS CROWDED WITH THE BRITISH EVACUATION FLEET. THE GUN POSITION AT KAZONE HAD BEEN DESIGNED TO GUARD THE ENTRANCE TO THE PORT. NOW IT WAS GUARDING THE EXIT!



THE MORNING SUN WAS RISING ON HIGH DRAMA IN VOLOS. IT WAS REFLECTED ON A SMALLER SCALE OUTSIDE THE MAGAZINE AT KAZONE.

— AGAIN! THEY'RE HAMMERING THE PORT GOOD AND PROPER. WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT? STAND AND WATCH!

WE -- YOU CAN'T DO ANYTHING, COOKY!





BUT COOKY WAS PAST LISTENING TO REASON. HE WAS FIGHTING MAD. WITH A FUSE KEY TAKEN FROM THE MAGAZINE, HE WORKED ON THE FUSES OF THE TWO SHELLS ON THE TROLLY.



THE RAILS RAN RIGHT DOWN TO THE BASE OF THE MASSIVE GUN MOUNTINGS. IMMersed IN THE LOADING AND FIRING OF THE GUNS, THE GERMANS DID NOT NOTICE THE TROLLY AS IT SPED TOWARDS THEM ...



...UNTIL IT WAS WITHIN A FEW YARDS OF THE GUN ITSELF. THEN IT WAS TOO LATE...



FOR A SECOND, TIME STOOD STILL. COOKY AND HIS VOLUNTEERS WERE ROOTED TO THE GROUND, AS IF MESMERISED WHILE WAITING FOR THE EXPLOSION.

YOU AND YOU!
SCHNELL! TAKE
THOSE MEN!

BUT NO EXPLOSION CAME!

THE TROLLY CRASHED INTO THE BASE OF THE GUN MOUNTING AND THAT WAS ALL. ALREADY GERMAN SOLDIERS HAD CLOSED IN UPON COOKY AND HIS MEN.

ENGLANDERS! STRAYS FROM THE PACK AT VOLOS, EH? TRYING FANCY TRICKS WITH THE AMMUNITION! TAKE THEM TO MAJOR SCHARNLOZ!



INSIDE THE CAB OF THE TRUCK, TONY'S FINGERNAILS CUT INTO HIS PALMS AS HE WATCHED THE GERMAN SMASH HIS HAND ACROSS COOKY'S FACE.



STILL COOKY REFUSED. THE GERMAN SNATCHED THE LUGER FROM HIS BELT...



IN THE GLOOM OF THE HIDDEN TRUCK, CAPTAIN TONY GIBBS WAS COMING TO TERMS WITH HIMSELF. THE PITY HE HAD FELT FOR THE ITALIANS HAD LONG SINCE OOZED AWAY UNDER THE PRESSURE OF THE GERMAN BLITZ. THE MENACE OF THIS BRUTAL ENEMY COMPLETED THE TRANSFORMATION.



STRANGELY, DESPITE THE DANGER,
HE FELT EXCITED, ALMOST HAPPY
FOR THE FIRST TIME FOR MONTHS.
HE SLIPPED SILENTLY OUT OF THE
CAB TOWARDS THE NEAREST
GERMAN ...



IN ONE VIOLENT MOVED BACK, HE THROWN
FELLING THE GERMANS, GRABBED HIS
CARBINE AND FIRED.



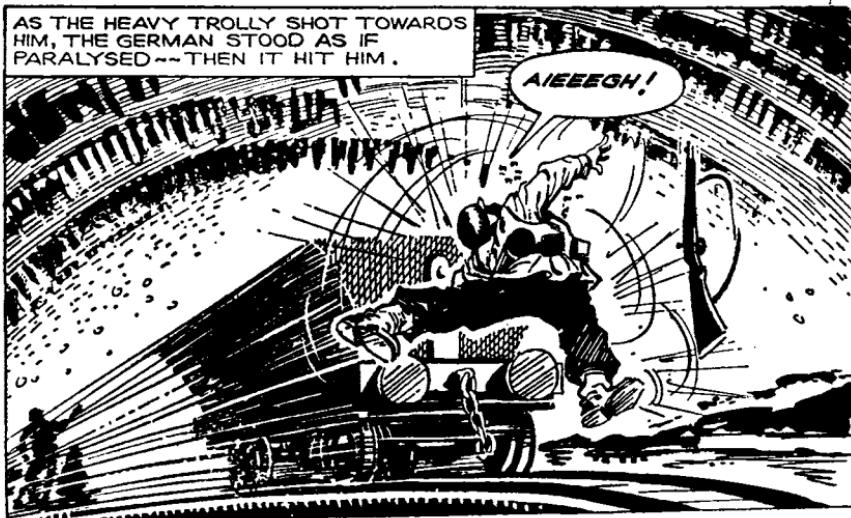
TWO MORE SNAP SHOTS CUT DOWN TWO MORE GERMANS. THE FOURTH
MAN SCURRIED TO THE END OF THE MAGAZINE ...



BUT IT WAS COOKY, COMING TO LIFE AGAIN, WHO SAW THE QUICKEST METHOD OF DEALING WITH THE LAST GERMAN. HE GAVE THE TROLLY A HEFTY PUSH ...



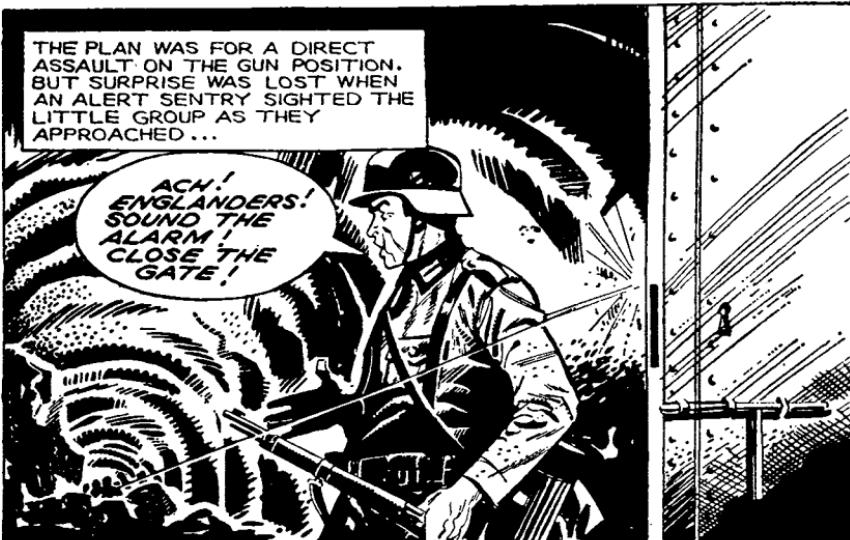
AS THE HEAVY TROLLY SHOT TOWARDS HIM, THE GERMAN STOOD AS IF PARALYSED--THEN IT HIT HIM.





THE PLAN WAS FOR A DIRECT ASSAULT ON THE GUN POSITION. BUT SURPRISE WAS LOST WHEN AN ALERT SENTRY SIGHTED THE LITTLE GROUP AS THEY APPROACHED ...

ACH!
ENGLANDERS!
SOUND THE ALARM!
CLOSE THE GATE!



THEY TOOK THE BULL BY THE HORNS AND CHARGED. BUT THE IRON DOOR SLAMMED INTO PLACE EVEN AS THEY REACHED THE GATE!

DARN IT! WHAT THE HECK DO WE DO NOW?
WE BLAST IT! REMEMBER WHAT CHARLIE PELLEW SAID ABOUT THE GAS CYLINDERS? THEY'RE EXPLOSIVE! WE'RE ARTILLERYMEN, AREN'T WE?



BACK IN THE MAGAZINE, TONY HURLED QUESTIONS AT CHARLIE ...

ALL I KNOW ABOUT THE GAS ARE THE SAFETY RULES. IF THE GAS TOUCHES OIL IT CATCHES FIRE, DOESN'T IT?

IT DOES THAT!
THE WHOLE CYLINDER EXPLODES! KEEP OIL AWAY FROM THE CYLINDERS--SAFETY RULE NUMBER ONE, THAT IS!



TONY BECAME GALVANISED INTO ACTION ...

RIGHT! COOKY, UNSCREW THE FUSE OFF A SHELL AND TAKE OUT THE T.N.T. -- BUT GENTLY! CHARLIE, I WANT SIX FULL GAS CYLINDERS. SMITH, GET OIL FROM THE SUMP OF THE TRUCK AND PETROL FROM THE TANK. THE REST, WITH ME, OUTSIDE...



OUTSIDE, TWO HOLES WERE DUG IN THE GROUND WHILE THE MEN COLLECTED TWO LARGE DRAIN PIPES FROM THE STACK NEAR THE MAGAZINE.

UP-END THEM' IN THE HOLES. I THINK I'VE GOT THE ANGLE RIGHT, BUT I WANT TO SEE IF THEY FIT.

LIKE BLOOMIN' BIG MORTAR BARRELS, AREN'T THEY, SIR?



THEN TONY PUT SOME POWDERED T.N.T. IN THE PIPES AND POURED PETROL INTO THE HOLES.

NOW, HERE'S THE DRILL ! WE SOAK THE NECK OF THE CYLINDERS IN OIL, OPEN THE VALVES AND LET THE GAS ESCAPE. THAT CATCHES FIRE AND, IF WE'RE LUCKY, BY THE TIME THE CYLINDER GETS THERE, IT'S REACHED EXPLOSION POINT !

GETS THERE ?
HOW P ?

I GET IT !
YOU'RE GOING
TO USE THEM
AS MORTARS !

IT WAS CRUDE GUNNERY,
BUT IT MIGHT WORK !

RIGHT ! OPEN THE VALVES ! COOKY,
GET READY TO LIGHT THE PETROL IN
THE HOLES. THAT WILL HAVE SEEPED
THROUGH ON TO THE T.N.T. IT WILL
GIVE US THE FIRING CHARGE .

WE'LL GET RESULTS
ONE WAY OR THE OTHER !
IT'LL KILL THEM ...
OR US !

AS COOKY TOUCHED OFF THE PETROL, THE FLAMING CYLINDERS FLEW THROUGH THE AIR, LEAVING HOLES, IGNITING THE T.N.T. THE EXPLOSION ROCKETED THE CYLINDERS THROUGH THE AIR, LIKE FANTASTIC MORTAR BOMBS ...



THE 5 FT. CYLINDERS WEIGHED 200 LBS. AND WERE FILLED WITH GAS AT 1,980 LBS. PER SQUARE INCH. THEY WERE DYNAMITE! THEY SMASHED OUT OF THE SKY DOWN ON TO THE GUN BATTERY...



THE NEXT CYLINDERS WERE AIMED AT THE GATE. THIS TIME THE VERY WEIGHT AND VELOCITY OF THE MISSILES SMASHED THE GATE ASIDE ...

UP THE GUNNERS!

AND THE ORDNANCE, SIR!



THE GERMAN COAST DEFENCE GUNNERS LACKED THE FIGHTING CALIBRE OF PARATROOPERS OR FRONT-LINE INFANTRY. EVEN CHARLIE PELLEW COULD DEAL WITH THEM, USING AN IRON BAR ...

OH NO
YOU DON'T,
FRITZ!



THEIR FINAL ACT WAS TO RAM GAS CYLINDERS INTO THE BREECHES OF THE GUNS.

THAT PUTS PAID TO THEM !
NOW WE'LL SET FIRE TO THE TRUCK IN THE MAGAZINE AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

DO WE HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE, SIR ?
MAYBE WE COULD FIND A BOAT...

WHILE THE EXPLOSION SET A FIRE, COOKY SOUGHT OUT THE TWO NEARBY VITI ZODIAC

WHEN THE EXPLOSION SET UP, THEY SHOULD TAKE OFF A CHAIN FROM THAT AMMO IN HERE.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT, SIR...
BUT IT OUGHT TO MAKE A BLOOMING BIG BANG !

COOKY, TONY GIBBS AND THE MOBILE INDUSTRIAL GAS COMPANY WERE MOVING ACROSS THE BAY TO THE PORT OF VOLGS WHEN THE WHOLE HILLSIDE Erupted IN A DEVASTATING EXPLOSION.

MAGNIFICENT !
THAT'S PUT PAID TO KAZONE FOR A LONG TIME !

AND WITH RESPECT, SIR, I THINK IT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE GAS COMPANY'S HONOURS !

SOMETHING LIKE THE 'CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE', EH, CHARLIE ?

THE MAIN EVACUATION WAS WELL UNDER WAY BY THE TIME THEY REACHED THE HARBOUR. BOTH TONY'S AND COOKY'S THOUGHTS WERE ALREADY WITH THE FUTURE ...

TONY, FOR A
NON-COMBATANT,
THAT LITTLE ACTION
WASN'T BAD. YOU
GOING BACK TO THE
ORDNANCE?

NO, COOKY. I'VE A
GREAT RESPECT FOR
THAT CORPS -- BUT
IT'S BACK TO THE
ARTILLERY FOR ME --
AND A BASH AT THE
JERRIES WITH REAL
GUNS!

FOR CAPTAIN TONY GIBBS HAD FINALLY
REALISED THAT A TIME OF WAR WAS NO TIME
FOR THE LUXURY OF A TOUCHY CONSCIENCE.
A SOLDIER HAD TO FIGHT — OR DIE!

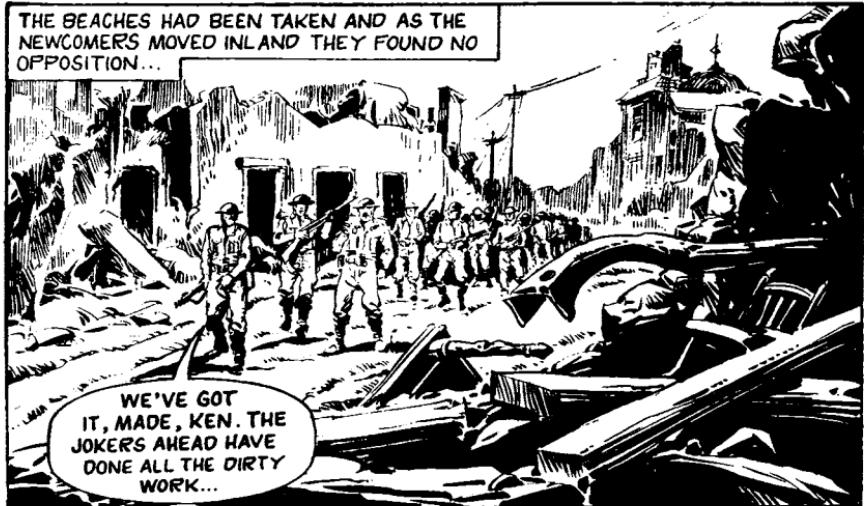
THE CATCH

IT WAS A WEEK AFTER 'D' DAY IN JUNE 1944. MORE TROOPS WERE BEING POURED ASHORE AS THE FOLLOW-UP FORCE TO EXPAND THE BRIDGE-HEAD...



THE BEACHES HAD BEEN TAKEN AND AS THE NEWCOMERS MOVED INLAND THEY FOUND NO OPPONITION...

WE'VE GOT IT, MADE, KEN. THE JOKERS AHEAD HAVE DONE ALL THE DIRTY WORK...



THE WORDS HAD HARDLY BEEN SPOKEN
WHEN SHELLFIRE ROARED OVER...

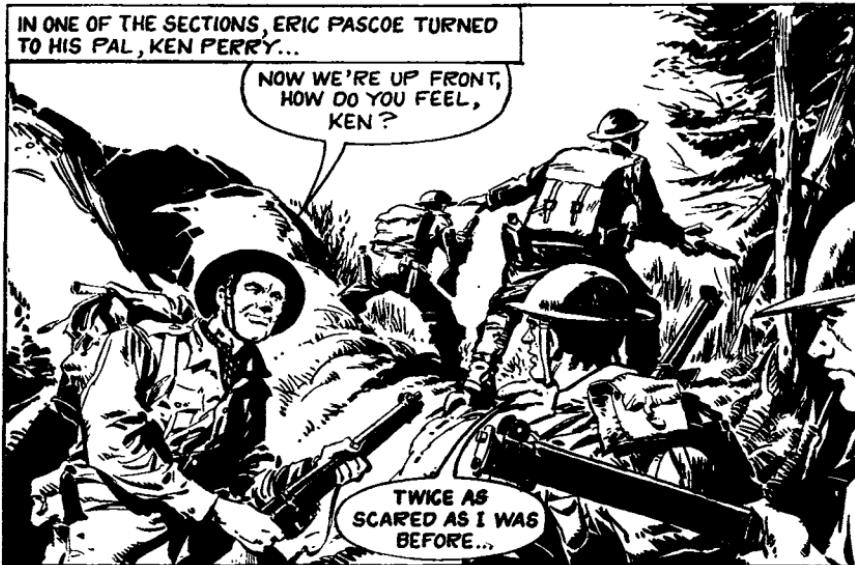


I THOUGHT
YOU SAID IT WAS GOING
TO BE DEAD EASY—
MORE LIKE EASY
DEAD.

THEY STAYED UNDER COVER UNTIL
THE SHELLING CEASED THEN WENT
ON TO THEIR RENDEZVOUS POINT...



I'VE GOT A GUIDE FOR EACH
OF YOUR SECTIONS, TO LEAD
THEM UP TO THE AREAS
THEY'RE TAKING OVER.
YOU'LL BE MORE THAN
WELCOME, LIEUTENANT!



THE MEN THEY WERE RELIEVING
PULLED BACK FOR A WELL-EARNED
REST...

WE'LL TAKE
OUR CHANCES WITH
THE SNIPER, KEN, BUT I
DON'T FANCY ROUGH GRUB.
CAN'T YOU CATCH US
SOMETHING?

THERE
SHOULD BE SOME
GAME DOWN IN THOSE
WOODS...

KEN PERRY WAS A LINCOLNSHIRE LAD AND
CAME FROM A LONG LINE OF POACHERS...

I'VE
GOT MY SNARES
HERE...

SNARES,
PERRY? IF I CATCH
YOU WANDERING INTO THOSE
WOODS YOU'LL WISH
YOU'D JOINED THE
NAVY!

DON'T TAKE
ANY NOTICE OF HIM, KEN.
ALL THE LADS WILL KEEP
IT QUIET...

WHEN NIGHT FELL, KEN CRESTED OUT
INTO THE WOOD...

I'LL SET THE SNARES AND
COME BACK AT FIRST LIGHT...

BUT WHEN HE WENT BACK IN THE FIRST COLD LIGHT OF DAY...



HE WAS ON HIS WAY BACK WHEN HE SPOTTED THE MARKIN IN THE HILL I BAR IN



HE BENT DOWN — AND SAVED HIS LIFE...



THERE WERE NO MORE SHOTS AND KEN HURRIED BACK AS FAST AS HE COULD...

ANY LUCK?

NICE VENISON STEAK'D GO DOWN WELL, WOULDN'T IT?

WELL, IF I'M GOING TO GET A DEER I'LL NEED SOMETHING STRONGER THAN SNARES. I'LL COLLECT SOME TOGGLE ROPES FROM THE LADS...

ONLY THAT I'M STILL ALIVE! BUT I DID SEE SOME DEER TRACKS OUT THERE. I'LL TRY AGAIN TONIGHT.

THAT NIGHT HE LAID HIS TRAP...

THAT SHOULD DO THE TRICK.

WHEN HE RETURNED, THE TRAP HAD BEEN SPRUNG - BUT NOT BY A DEER...

IT'S THE SNIPER!



HE WAITED FOR THE GERMAN TO RECOVER CONSCIOUSNESS...

ACH! WHAT HAPPENED...

YOU COULD SAY YOU PUT YOUR FOOT IN IT, MATE!



THE LIEUTENANT HAD DISCOVERED KEN'S ABSENCE. HE WAS LAYING THE LAW DOWN WHEN THE POACHER RE-APPEARED...

IF PERRY IS IN THOSE WOODS, I'LL SEND HIM BACK AND HAVE HIM TRANSFERRED TO A MOBILE BATH UNIT... WHAT ON EARTH...

HEY! LOOK WHAT I CAUGHT, BLOKES!



IT TOOK TEN MINUTES TO EXPLAIN TO THE IRATE OFFICER. BUT THEN...

WELL, PERRY, IF THAT'S
THE SORT OF POACHING
YOU DO, YOU CAN
GO ANY TIME YOU
LIKE.'

I WAS
THINKING OF GIVING IT
UP, SIR. AFTER CATCHING
THAT BLOKE ANYTHING
ELSE WOULD BE
SMALL GAME!



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BATTLE

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Thursday, March 6

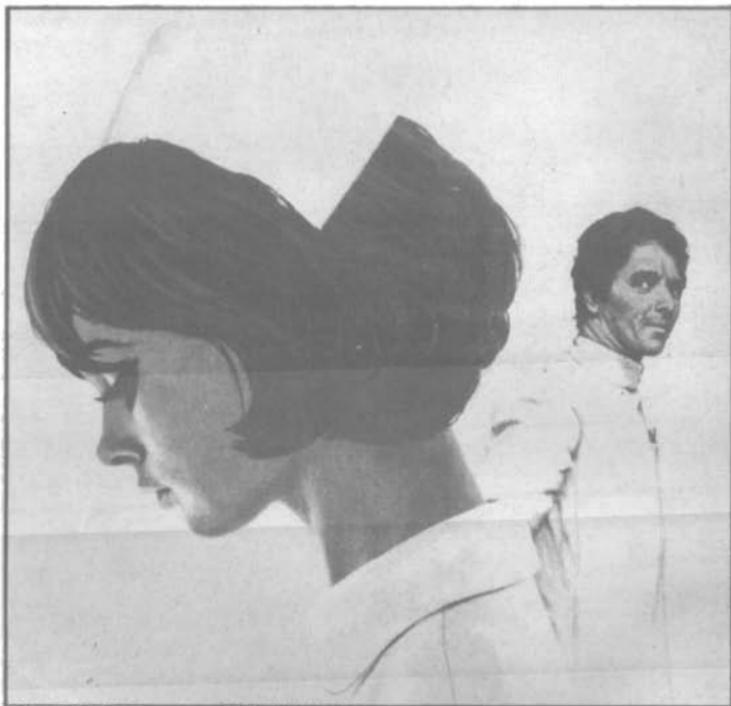


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